Government of Saskatchewan

Annual Report 2002-2003

Information Technology Office

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Annual Report 2002-2003

Information Technology Office

for the fiscal year ending
March 31, 2003

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The Honourable Andrew Thomson
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

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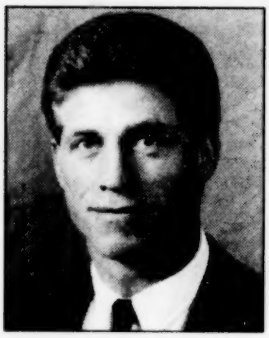
Her Honour
The Honourable Dr. Lynda M. Haverstock
Lieutenant Governor
Province of Saskatchewan

May it Please Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report of the Information Technology Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003

Andrew Thomson
Minister Responsible for Information Technology



The Honourable Andrew Thomson
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

Dear Sir:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Information Technology Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

John Law
Chief Information and Services Officer

Who We Are

Operating under the leadership of the Chief Information and Services Officer for Saskatchewan, the Information Technology Office (ITO) establishes and coordinates policies and programs that use information management (IM) and information technology (IT) to enhance public access, strengthen the government's ability to undertake electronic service delivery, and enable electronic commerce throughout the province.

Formerly a branch of Saskatchewan Industry and Resources, the ITO was established as a stand-alone government agency in the fiscal year 2002 - 2003. The former position of Chief Information Officer was elevated to the level of a Permanent Head and renamed Chief Information and Services Officer. The changes were made to reflect government's priority of service delivery to citizens, rather than only the IT infrastructure needed to deliver services. It also recognizes the importance of IT and IM to the province's future economic success in an ever increasing wired world and the new knowledge economy.

The ITO works with government departments and agencies to create enterprise-wide services and standards to optimize both the efficiency and effectiveness of executive government expenditures on IT. It also works with key partners to give citizens streamlined service options from a variety of channels, including Web Portals, service centres and inquiry lines.

The ITO's 16 full-time staff work with government, community and private partners on initiatives aimed at ensuring Saskatchewan people can take full advantage of what the IT revolution has to offer. For example, the ITO was the lead agency on CommunityNet, which is providing high-speed Internet and improved access to on-line data resources to every school, health care facility, library and government office in the province.

CommunityNet has also provided the impetus for Crown-owned SaskTel to expand its commercial high-speed Internet service to businesses and individuals in 237 communities throughout Saskatchewan.

The office also works with internal government clients on implementing more efficient and cost-effective ways of sharing information and providing services to the public. This includes key on-line services available to the public via the Internet, as well as consolidation and development of internal systems that enable government departments to work together more efficiently to the benefit of both themselves and their public clients.

Clients

The majority of the ITO's clients at this time are internal government departments and agencies. The exceptions are the CommunityNet and Government of Saskatchewan Central Web Portal branches, which deal on a daily basis with external organizations, such as the educational and health care communities, and the general public. However, the office is beginning to take on an expanded role as a liaison to the private sector IT community.

Services

- Provides strategic direction and advice to Cabinet, government departments and agencies in the areas of IT, IM, security, privacy and web-based service delivery.
- Coordinates government-wide IT and IM initiatives.
- Provides advice and support to external CommunityNet clients, such as the educational and health care sectors.
- Coordinates the response to public requests for government information and services received via the Government of Saskatchewan Central Web Portal.

Our Vision

"Using technology to help government serve people"

The vision for the ITO addresses these needs:

1. To provide seamless, automated, single window service delivery for citizens regardless of location; and,

2. To use IT and IM techniques in augmenting the productivity/efficiency of government operations.

Our Goals

The ITO goals and priorities address the major components of government business:

- Who we serve;
- How we do business; and,
- How we manage our resources.

CommunityNet

CommunityNet is Saskatchewan's shared, secure public-sector province-wide data network that by the end of 2003 will:

- Connect K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions in the province.
  - high-speed Internet access
  - no usage charges (flat rate)
  - distance education applications
- Connect health care facilities in the province.
  - telemedicine, remote diagnostics, access to specialists on-line
  - secure, confidential access to patient information
- Connect government offices.
  - expand ability to deliver e-government services
  - share data, applications and resources
- Connect public libraries.
  - extend Internet services to citizens who may not otherwise have the skills or the financial ability to obtain the necessary computer equipment
  - access to province-wide library services on-line
- Provide external connectivity to private sector enterprises.
- Provide the critical mass to rationalize advancing infrastructure in rural Saskatchewan.
- Extend social, educational and economic opportunities to even the smallest Saskatchewan communities.

Priorities

When CommunityNet is fully deployed by the end of 2003 - 2004, the service will be available in 366 communities, connecting:

- 795 schools and educational facilities.
- 30 regional colleges and post-secondary institutions.
- 310 health care facilities in the province.
- 256 Government offices.
- 85 First Nations schools.
- 162 public libraries.
- 237 communities throughout Saskatchewan will have access to SaskTel's commercial high-speed Internet service, because CommunityNet has enabled the Crown corporation to build a solid business case to offer the service in those communities.

2002 - 2003 Accomplishments

- 650 of 795 Saskatchewan schools have been connected to CommunityNet, up from 530 schools connected in 2001 - 2002.
- 85 of 85 First Nations schools have been connected to CommunityNet.
- 30 of 30 regional colleges and post-secondary institutions have been connected to CommunityNet.
- 300 of 310 health facilities have been connected to CommunityNet, up from 120 health care facilities in 2001 - 2002.
- 235 of 256 government offices have been connected to CommunityNet, up from 106 government offices connected in 2001 - 2002.
- 30 of 162 provincial public libraries have been connected to CommunityNet.
- CommunityNet is available in 366 communities, up from 245 communities in 2001 - 2002.
- SaskTel offers commercial high-speed Internet service in 146 communities, up from 46 communities in 2001 - 2002.

Privacy

The ITO's work on privacy issues is an important supporting piece to its other initiatives, particularly IM and IT security. Privacy is an integral part of encouraging citizen use of on-line services, the public must have confidence in the government's ability to handle their information.

Priorities

- Facilitate the development and implementation of stringent, workable privacy standards and policies for all government departments and agencies.
- Ensure the safety and privacy of all information collected and generated by government, especially information related to its dealings with citizens, businesses and other private agencies.
- Encourage the use of on-line government services by instilling public confidence in the way their information is managed and stored.

2002 - 2003 Accomplishments

- Aided and facilitated the work of a major review of government privacy practices undertaken by Deloitte and Touche at the request of the government, as the result of several breeches of privacy within government organizations.
- Assisted in developing a privacy framework for executive government and each of the Crown Investment Corporation Crowns.
- Participated on the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Privacy and the Deputy Minister's Working Group on Privacy.
- Participated in national conferences and meetings on privacy issues.
- Assisted in reviewing outsourcing policies to make sure government contracts include specific privacy requirements.
- Began implementation of a data classification system in support of privacy.

Enterprise Architecture

The Enterprise Architecture (EA) is a management and planning tool that helps develop strategic, interoperable and compatible systems by providing a consistent approach to IM and IT across an organization. Standards, guidelines and statements of direction in the Architecture make up the structure of program or system components that allow them to work together. The Architecture will improve the co-ordination and reconciliation of business and technical processes.

Priorities

- Reduce costs of government agencies.
- Enhance IT services to sustain and improve government program and service delivery.
- Ensure that government employees have the appropriate technology to work effectively.
- Improve reliability and access to needed information.
- Reduce duplication of information.
- Enable the future development of innovative and cost-effective business solutions.

2002 - 2003 Accomplishments

- The EA Steering Committee developed terms of reference for the project, a business architecture and a governance model.

The business architecture is a description of what principles will be addressed to support the future vision for how government operates.

- Through the work of the Steering Committee, the overall architecture developed into the following set of sub-architectures: EA (grew out of the original business architecture), Infrastructure, Security, Application, IT Operations, and IM.
- Technical working groups drafted detailed sub-architecture documents. The Steering Committee and each working group reviewed all of the documents to identify overlaps and ensure they support the principles.

Information Management

Information management refers to a comprehensive approach to standards, best practices and policies that ensure the information that government creates, collects and delivers is organized and preserved consistently across departments. Government-wide IM policies and best practices support a citizen-centred, collaborative approach to government, with appropriate security and privacy measures in place to protect information.

Priorities

- Develop an enterprise-wide approach to the lifecycle of information that maintains public trust by ensuring that essential records of government are protected and managed in a secure environment.

2002 - 2003 Accomplishments

- Created an IM Architecture as a framework for developing standards, policies and guidelines for managing government information.
- Facilitated the development of the Saskatchewan Water IM (SWIM) Project, a collaborative approach to integrate provincial water quality data. Primary partners include Saskatchewan Environment, Saskatchewan Health and Saskatchewan Water Corporation. The SASKH2O Web Site has been developed to ensure public access to information on water related issues.
- Established a Records Management Working Group to develop a records management strategy, recommend a governance and accountability structure, and recommend standards and best practices for records management across government. The group has developed a draft policy for the management of government electronic mail.
- Developed the Government of Saskatchewan Thesaurus, a common vocabulary for describing government information at the point of creation. A directory, or Thesaurus, of standardized terms will assist in preserving and locating information produced by government.
- Coordinated the development of a web-enabled Publications Centre. This centre, which is in the prototype stage, will function as a central repository of all information produced by government, ensuring the preservation and continued access to key government information.

Security

The ITO establishes and coordinates security policies that pertain to IT initiatives and systems. The policies ensure that government information and information collected by government from citizens and clients is stored in a safe and secure manner, accessible only by authorized personnel.

Priorities

- Develop government-wide IT security policies.
- Support the implementation of IT security measures within government.
- Provide security advice to departments and agencies on internal security policies and standards.

2002 - 2003 Accomplishments

- Developed a government-wide e-mail and voice mail emergency contact list. The voice mail contact list is the first developed by a Canadian provincial government.
- Participated in a weekly national security conference call and disseminated the information as needed to departments.
- Developed a Security Policy Web Site to provide quick and easy access to security information for all government security personnel.
- Refined the Security Policy Template and populated it with security policies and standards to be used by any department/agency.
- Worked with Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation (SPMC) and the Security Architecture Sub-Committee to refine confidentiality clauses in IT vendor agreements.
- Drafted an Acknowledgement of Acceptable Use of IT form.
- Chaired a sub-committee in the development of a Security Architecture for executive government. The Architecture provides a baseline of security that includes policies, standards and guidelines for acquisition, disposal and use of technology assets.
- Refined CommunityNet security policies within the Security Architecture.
- Provided consulting to various departments on IT security issues.
- Completed a number of departmental IT security reviews, including a high-level network review.
- Organized and hosted a security workshop for government security professionals.
- Drafted an IT Security Threat Posture. The strategy outlines potential threats and recommends security safeguards based on the threat probability and possible impact to government assets.
- Drafted an IT incident handling procedure.

Government On-Line

In the fall of 2000, the government released *"A Strategic Plan for E-Government in the Digital Economy"*. This broad initiative would enhance services to citizens by making government services available electronically, allowing citizens to access them from where ever they might live and at the time of their choosing. The plan set out two government-wide targets:

- All paper-based forms used by the Provincial Government will be available on-line by 2002; and,
- Ninety per cent of all transactions (volume based) between the Provincial Government and Saskatchewan citizens will be available on-line by 2004.

The goal of providing all government forms on-line by 2002 was extended to ensure privacy, security and user authentication issues are appropriately addressed. Until systems are in place to ensure these three provisions can be met, most forms will be available only for printing and submission by traditional methods. More than 800 forms are currently available for printing on-line and the number is growing rapidly. Enhancements are now being made to enable electronic submission of forms where

appropriate, with all forms to be available through a one-stop, web-based storefront.

The goal of having 90 per cent of the volume of all transactions between the government and the public available on-line by 2004 is on target, with 85 per cent already available.

A Government On-Line (GOL) Fund was established to assist departments in achieving the government-wide targets. The resulting benefits can be seen in a number of successful projects. In the two years since the funding was made available to departments, there have been 86 applications received resulting in funding for over 50 new or expanded on-line services.

The ITO is responsible for administering the GOL Fund. The office oversees the preparation of proposals, development and selection of projects, and financial administration of agreements and funding for approved projects. As well, staff is involved with high-level project management, development and implementation of governance models, and policies to enable province wide initiatives.

Some of the more significant projects undertaken under the GOL Fund include:

- The Saskatchewan Electronic Tax Service (SETS) allows businesses or their agents to securely submit and track their accounts of various taxes paid to the province.
- Freelaw provides free on-line access to printable versions of all Saskatchewan Acts and Regulations, *The Saskatchewan Gazette* and other legislative publications.
- The Big Game Draw enables sportsmen to apply, pay fees and check the status of their application on-line for the province's big game hunt.
- The On-Line Fine Payment Web Site allows people to pay speeding and other summary offence tickets over the Internet.
- A "payment gateway" was developed for use by all government departments undertaking Internet-based initiatives that allow citizens to pay for government services, such as license fees on-line.

Priorities

- Working with government departments, Crowns and agencies to change the relationships among government agencies, commercial and community organizations, and citizens.
- Providing leadership in the development of better access to services for rural and remote communities.
- Striving to make government processes more efficient through automation and/or transformation of services.

2002 - 2003 Accomplishments

- Administered the GOL Fund that supports departments in the development and enhancement of electronic service delivery.
- Promoted on-line services as an opportunity to use information and technology to provide new services to citizens of Saskatchewan, no matter where they live.
- Met the needs of citizens by providing easy access to on-line taxes, licenses and forms through assisting in development of projects, such as the cross government *Publications Centre and International Fuel Tax services.*
- Provided a more organized approach to government information and services around the needs of citizens and businesses, demonstrated in projects, such as the launch of the Saskbiz Web Site and on-line access to business registration.

Government of Saskatchewan Web Portal

The ITO has responsibility for the long-term and daily operation of the Government of Saskatchewan's Central Web Portal. The main purpose of the portal is to serve as the public's "jumping off" point to the on-line services and information of individual government departments and agencies. It also serves as a promotional tool for the province, provides access to frequently requested information or public informational items of an urgent nature, and provides a central contact point for public requests for information or services.

Priorities

- Collaborate with executive government departments and agencies to provide and maintain an effective on-line tool for supplying quick, easy public access to government services and information.
- Research and monitor emerging web technology developments and user demands to ensure GOL initiatives are delivered in the most effective way possible.
- Provide professional advice to other provincial government agencies to support forward-thinking approaches to government web technology initiatives.
- Provide effective and efficient public service by coordinating quick response to public requests for information or services.
- Position the Central Web Portal as the public's first point of contact for on-line government information and services.
- Provide one-stop access to major government publications, forms and other information by working with the Queen's Printer to integrate the Publications Centre with the Central Web Portal.

2002 - 2003 Accomplishments

- Undertook a major graphical and minor functional redesign of the Central Web Portal in order to improve its effectiveness as a service delivery and promotional tool for the province.
- Implemented the Government of Saskatchewan Thesaurus on the Central Web Portal, the first use within the Government of Saskatchewan of controlled vocabulary to manage content across department web sites.
- Coordinated the work of government departments in converting government forms used by the public into electronic format available on-line. When completed, all forms will be provided through the Publications Centre and available for on-line submission where feasible.
- Started the development of a user managed "Programs and Services" database to replace the "Who Does What" feature of the Central Web Portal.
- Worked with government departments and agencies to implement new visual identity standards for government Web sites.
- Maintained the Central Web Portal on a daily basis to ensure its accuracy and timeliness.
- Consulted and advised other government departments and agencies on web-related issues, including development, maintenance, policies and standards.
- Answered or coordinated the response to 4,847 public requests received through the Central Web Portal for government information or services.
- Attracted more than 2 million users to the site, compared to just over

1.5 million in the previous year of operation. That is an increase of more than 35 per cent in the number of people utilizing the site in just one year.

Department Financial Overview

Information Technology Office Financial Overview 2002 - 2003

	2002 - 2003 Budget ($thousands)	2002 - 2003 Actuals ($thousands)
Administration and IT Initiatives	2,158	1,966
Government On-Line	3,135	2,661
TOTAL	**5,293**	**4,627**

Variance explanations

1. Administration costs were lower than budgeted due to the fact that several FTEs were vacant during the fiscal year. Some savings were offset by the purchase of computer equipment and moving expenses associated with setting up the ITO as an independent agency within executive government.

2. Expenditures of the GOL program were lower than budgeted due to the fact that several projects to be initiated by the departments of Industry and Resources, Justice and Environment did not proceed due to time constraints, similarity to programs initiated by other departments, or technical considerations.

Trends and Issues

Overview

As one of the most "connected" jurisdictions in the world, Saskatchewan has an excellent opportunity to take advantage of what new information technologies can do for our economic and social well being. The province has already made important strides in e-learning and on-line government services, while many of its businesses are developing e-commerce options in order to expand and diversify themselves. The ITO is developing a performance plan for 2004 - 2005 as the next step in working together to build on the progress that has been made. The plan will be flexible and designed to evolve over time.

This annual report summarizes the ITO's first year as a stand alone organization within government. As the office takes on more responsibility and becomes more directly involved in IT issues both within and outside of government, future annual reports will reflect a more complex and ambitious agenda.

Information Management

Until 10 years ago, government was a paper-based organization. With the move to an electronic environment, there has been a rapid growth in the volume of information generated. Departments now must file, track, make available and preserve a combination of paper and electronic records. They often view the processes required to manage the various formats as separate functions. This results in significant duplication of information as many agencies maintain records in several formats to suit their own purposes. As well, inter and intra-agency sharing of records is a task complicated by policies that restrict access to decision-making information.

A shared view of what public servants need to know about managing information, the nature of IM, and the skills and abilities required to build and maintain an IM infrastructure, has yet to be entrenched. Training, education, and recruitment programs for public servants need to more strongly reflect IM considerations, especially at the senior levels. Demographics suggest that valuable information and knowledge could be lost as public servants retire or change jobs. Champions are needed for the development of a government-wide IM community.

Technology

The current technical environment in executive government consists of a collection of de-centralized and distributed networks of information and applications specific to each government agency. This approach evolved primarily in the 1980's as IT moved from a traditional mainframe environment towards a distributed computing environment using personal computers and focusing on desktop applications that were designed, based on a departmental, branch or program perspective.

Often, these systems were not designed to inter-connect or inter-operate, and any standards in place are at an individual departmental level. Security firewalls are also in place that prevent easy access to information by staff within the same department and that render data sharing with staff from other departments difficult if not impossible. The ITO is working with all departments to facilitate the sharing of information across government.

A province-wide network - CommunityNet - is currently being implemented. This is an initiative that provides a high-speed network connection among all government offices, schools, health facilities and libraries throughout the province. While linking key public entities, CommunityNet does not yet reach all citizens, or remote areas of the province. Options are being explored to expand the network to provide access to a greater number of Saskatchewan residents and businesses.

Enterprise Architecture

The EA is the foundation for planning, coordinating and implementing IM and IT across government. The EA is a framework for the secure management of all computer hardware, networks and systems, and for the judicious administration of government records.

The goal of the EA is to enhance the delivery of the Government of Saskatchewan programs and services electronically. It consists of a business architecture and five sub-architectures: IM, IT Infrastructure, Security, Applications, and IT Operations.

The EA will:

- Set the standards for managing information and IT.
- Identify technologies that work together and those that do not.
- Point out new opportunities presented by the common Information and IT infrastructure.
- Contribute to Information and IT privacy and security.
- Promote consistency in Information and IT management and support.

Currently, the ITO is working with departments to complete the design and implementation phase of the EA.

Services to Citizens

Electronic delivery of programs and services has become the preferred method of governments around the world to connect with citizens. In Saskatchewan, this method enhances the reach of government to rural and remote areas not served by government offices. Freelaw (on-line legislation), the Saskatchewan Electronic Tax Service, and the Hunting and Fishing License Service are well used and promoted.

However, these services and others are presented to the public not from a central service perspective, but through the central government Web Portal as links to departments, agencies and Crown corporations that offer electronic services from their own web sites. The ITO is working with departments to develop shared service delivery initiatives, such as bundling of services that provide seamless single-entry interaction and access to government programs. A fully developed electronic service centre approach must also recognize the value to citizens and businesses of linking to services offered by other levels of government.

As important as electronic services are, not all citizens and businesses can or wish to access services on-line. Telephone services and personal contacts at regional service centres or with public servants must be promoted and supported as indispensable methods for reaching the government.

2003 - 2004 Budget Overview

Operating expenditures for the ITO will be $5,365,000 in 2003 - 2004. Office funding supports the adoption of technologies and IM practices that enable government departments and agencies to provide on-line services more efficiently and effectively to the citizens of Saskatchewan and other external clients. It also supports the adoption of policies that enable departments to work together in a more efficient manner, and to offer services with the full security and privacy measures the public expects when their private information is involved.

The table below breaks down the estimated planned expenditure for the ITO.

2003 - 2004 ITO Budget
(in thousands of dollars)

Administration	510
Accommodation and Central Services	155
Information Management and Technology Initiatives	4,700
Total	5,365

Who to call for further information

If you have any questions or comments, or would like additional copies of this report, we invite you to call:

Information Technology Office
(306) 787-8880

or visit our Web Site:
http://www.ito.gov.sk.ca

or e-mail: anewton@ito.gov.sk.ca

Appendix

Organization Chart

ITO

March 31, 2003